The Moral Dignity of the Missionary Enterprise.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE

The Boston Baptist Foreign Mission Society

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By F. WAYLAND, JUN.

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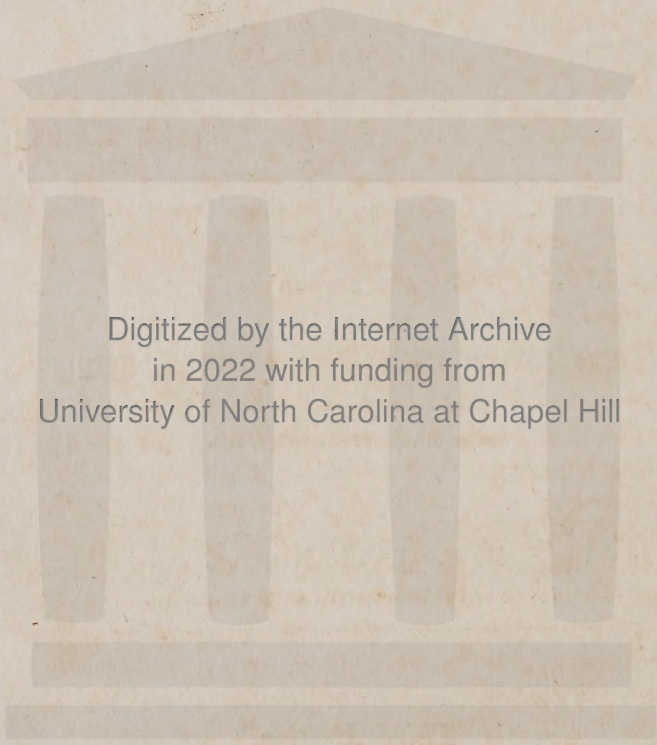
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SERMON.

MATTHEW xiii. 38.

THE FIELD IS THE WORLD.

PHILOSOPHERS have speculated much concerning a process of sensation, which has commonly been denominated the emotion of sublimity. Aware that, like any other simple feeling, it must be incapable of definition, they have seldom attempted to define it; but, content with remarking the occasions on which it is excited, have told us that it arises in general from the contemplation of whatever is vast in nature, splendid in intellect, or lofty in morals. Or, to express the same idea somewhat varied, in the language of a critic of antiquity,* "that alone is truly sublime of which the conception is vast, the effect irresistible, and the remembrance scarcely if ever to be erased."

But although philosophers alone have written about this emotion, they are far from being the only men who have felt it. The untutored peasant, when he has seen the autumnal tempest collecting between the hills, and as it advanced, enveloping in misty obscurity, village and hamlet, forest and meadow, has tasted the sublime in all its

* Longinus, Sec. VII.

reality; and whilst the thunder has rolled and the lightning flashed around him, has exulted in the view of nature moving forth in her majesty. The untaught sailor boy, listlesly hearkening to the idle ripple of the midnight wave, when on a sudden he has thought upon the unfathomable abyss beneath him and the wide waste of waters around him and the infinite expanse above him, has enjoyed to the full the emotion of sublimity, whilst his inmost soul has trembled at the vastness of its own conceptions. But why need I multiply illustrations from nature? Who does not recollect the emotion he has felt whilst surveying aught in the material world of terror or of vastness.

And this sensation is not produced by grandeur in material objects alone. It is also excited on most of those occasions in which we see man tasking to the uttermost, the energies of his intellectual or moral nature. Through the long lapse of centuries, who without emotion has read of LEONIDAS and his three hundred's throwing themselves as a barrier before the myriads of Xerxes, and contending unto death for the liberties of Greece!

But we need not turn to classic story to find all that is great in human action; we find it in our own times and in the history of our own country. Who is there of us that even in the nursery has not felt his spirit stir within him, when with childlike wonder he has listened to the story of WASHINGTON? And although the terms of the narrative were scarcely intelligible, yet the young soul kindled at the thought of one man's working out the deliverance of a nation. And as our understanding, strengthened by age, was at last able to grasp the detail of this transaction, we saw that our infantile conceptions had fallen far short of its grandeur. O if an American citizen ever exults in the contemplation of all that is sublime in human enterprise, it is when, bringing to mind the men who first conceived the idea of this nation's independence, he beholds them estimating the power of her oppressor, the resources of her citizens, deciding in their collected might that this nation should be free, and through the long years of trial that ensued, never blenching from their purpose, but freely

redeeming the pledge they had given, to consecrate to it "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honour."

> "Patriots have toil'd, and in their country's cause
> Bled nobly, and their deeds as they deserve
> Receive proud recompense. We give in charge
> Their names to the sweet lyre. The historic muse,
> Proud of her treasure, marches with it down
> To latest times; and sculpture in her turn
> Gives bond, in stone and ever-during brass,
> To guard them and immortalize her trust."

It is not in the field of patriotism alone that deeds have been achieved to which history has awarded the palm of moral sublimity. There have lived men, in whom the name of patriot has been merged in that of philanthropist; who, looking with an eye of compassion over the face of the earth, have felt for the miseries of our race, and have put forth their calm might to wipe off one blot from the marred and stained escutcheon of human nature, to strike off one form of suffering from the catalogue of human wo. Such a man was HOWARD. Surveying our world like a spirit of the blessed, he beheld the misery of the captive, he heard the groaning of the prisoner. His determination was fixed. He resolved single handed to guage and to measure one form of unpitied, unheeded wretchedness, and, bringing it out to the sunshine of public observation, to work its utter extermination. And he well knew what this undertaking would cost him. He knew what he had to hazard from the infection of dungeons, to endure from the fatigues of inhospitable travel, and to brook from the insolence of legalized oppression. He knew that he was devoting himself upon the altar of philanthropy, and he willingly devoted himself. He had marked out his destiny, and he hastened forward to its accomplishment, with an intensity "which the nature of the human mind forbade to be more, and the character of the individual forbade to be less."* Thus he commenced a new era in the history of benevolence. And hence the name of HOWARD will be associated with all that is sublime in mercy, until the final consummation of all things.

* Foster's Essay.

Such a man is CLARKSON, who, looking abroad beheld the sufferings of Africa, and looking at home, saw his country stained with her blood. We have seen him, laying aside the vestments of the priesthood, consecrate himself to the holy purpose of rescuing a continent from rapine and murder, and of erasing this one sin from the book of his nation's iniquities. We have seen him and his fellow philanthropists for twenty years never waver from their purpose. We have seen them persevere amidst neglect and obloquy and contempt and persecution, until the cry of the oppressed having roused the sensibilities of the nation, the "Island Empress" rose in her might, and said to this foul traffick in human flesh, Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.

It will not be doubted that in such actions as these, there is much which may truly be called the moral sublime. If, then, we should attentively consider them, we might perhaps ascertain what must be the elements of that enterprise, which may lay claim to this high appellation. It cannot be expected that on this occasion we should analyze them critically. It will, however, we think be found, upon examination, that to that enterprise alone has been awarded the meed of sublimity, of which the conception was vast, the execution arduous, and the means to be employed simple but efficient. Were not the object vast, it could not arrest our attention. Were not its accomplishment arduous, none of the nobler energies of man being tasked in its execution, we should see nothing to admire. Were not the means to that accomplishment simple, our whole conception being vague, the impression would be feeble. Were they not efficient, the intensest exertion could only terminate in failure and disgrace.

And here we may remark, that wherever these elements have combined in any undertaking, publick sentiment has generally united in pronouncing it sublime, and history has recorded its achievements among the noblest proofs of the dignity of man. Malice may for a while have frowned, and interest opposed; men who could neither grasp what was vast, nor feel what was morally great, may have ridi-

culed. But all this has soon passed away. Human nature is not to be changed by the opposition of interest or the laugh of folly. There is still enough of dignity in man to respect what is great, and to venerate what is benevolent. The cause of man has at last gained the suffrages of man. It has advanced steadily onward, and left ridicule to wonder at the impotence of its shaft, and malice to weep over the inefficacy of its hate.

And we bless God that it is so. It is cheering to observe, that amidst so much that is debasing, there is still something that is ennobling in the character of man. It is delightful to know that there are times when his morally bedimmed eye "beams keen with honour;" that there is yet a redeeming spirit within him, which exults in enterprises of great pith and moment. We love our race the better for every such fact we discover concerning it, and bow with more reverence to the dignity of human nature. We rejoice that, shattered as has been the edifice, there yet may be discovered now and then a massive pillar, and here and there a well turned arch, which remind us of the symmetry of its former proportions, and the perfection of its original structure.

Having paid this our honest tribute to the dignity of man, we must pause, and shed a tear over somewhat which reminds us of any thing other than his dignity. Whilst the general assertion is true, that he is awake to all that is sublime in nature, and much that is sublime in morals, there is reason to believe that there is a single class of objects, whose contemplation thrills all heaven with rapture, at which he can gaze unmelted and unmoved. The pen of inspiration has recorded, that the cross of Christ, whose mysteries the angels desire to look into, was to the tasteful and erudite Greek, foolishness. And we fear that cases very analogous to this may be witnessed at the present day. But why, my hearers, should it be so? Why should so vast a dissimilarity of moral taste exist between seraphs who bow before the throne, and men who dwell upon the footstool? Why is it that the man, whose soul swells with ecstasy whilst viewing the innumerable suns of midnight,

feels no emotion of sublimity when thinking of their Creator? Why is it that an enterprise of patriotism presents itself to his imagination beaming with celestial beauty, whilst the enterprise of redeeming love is without form or comeliness? Why should the noblest undertaking of mercy, if it only combine among its essential elements the distinctive principles of the gospel, become at once stale, flat, and unprofitable? When there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, why is it that the enterprise of proclaiming peace on earth, and good will to man, fraught, as it would seem, with more than angelic benignity, should to many of our fellow men appear worthy of nothing better than neglect or obloquy?

The reason for all this we shall not on this occasion pretend to assign. We have only time to express our regret that such should be the fact. Confining ourselves therefore to the bearing which this moral bias has upon the missionary cause, it is with pain we are obliged to believe, that there is a large and most respectable portion of our fellow citizens, for many of whom we entertain every sentiment of personal esteem, and to whose opinions on most other subjects we bow with unfeigned deference, who look with perfect apathy upon the present system of exertions for evangelizing the heathen; and we have been greatly misinformed, if there be not another, though a very different class, who consider these exertions a subject for ridicule. Perhaps it may tend somewhat to arouse the apathy of the one party, as well as to moderate the contempt of the other, if we can show that this very missionary cause combines within itself the elements of all that is sublime in human purpose, nay, combines them in a loftier perfection than any other enterprise, which was ever linked with the destinies of man. To show this will be our design; and in prosecuting it, we shall direct your attention to the grandeur of the object; the arduousness of its execution; and the nature of the means on which we rely for success.

1st. The grandeur of the object. In the most enlarged sense of the terms, *The Field is the World.* Our design is radically to affect the temporal and eternal inter-

ests of the whole race of man. We have surveyed this field *statistically*, and find, that of the eight hundred millions who inhabit our globe, but two hundred millions have any knowledge of the religion of Jesus Christ. Of these, we are willing to allow that but one half are his real disciples, and that therefore there are seven of the eight hundred millions to whom the gospel must be sent.

We have surveyed this field *geographically*. We have looked upon our own continent, and have seen that, with the exception of a narrow strip of thinly settled country, from the gulf of St. Lawrence to the mouth of the Mississippi, the whole of this new world lieth in wickedness. Hordes of ruthless savages roam the wilderness of the West, and men almost as ignorant of the spirit of the gospel, are struggling for independence in the South.

We have looked over Europe, and behold there one nation putting forth her energies in the cause of evangelizing the world. We have looked for another such nation; but it is not to be found. A few others are beginning to awake. Most of them, however, yet slumber. Many are themselves in need of missionaries. Nay, we know not but the movement of the cause of man in Europe is at present retrograde. There seems too evidently a coalition formed of the powers that be, to check the progress of moral and intellectual improvement, and to rivet again on the human mind the manacles of papal superstition. God only knows how soon the re-action will commence, which shall shake the continent to its centre, scatter thrones and sceptres and all the insignia of prescriptive authority, like the dust of the summer's threshing floor, and establish throughout the Christian world representative governments, on the broad basis of common sense and inalienable right.

We have looked over Africa, and have seen that upon one little portion, reclaimed from brutal idolatry by missionaries, the Sun of Righteousness has shined. It is a land of Goshen, where they have light in their dwellings. Upon all the remainder of this vast continent, there broods a moral darkness, impervious as that which once veiled her own Egypt, on that prolonged and fearful night when no man knew his brother.

We have looked upon Asia, and have seen its northern nations, though under the government of a Christian prince, scarcely nominally Christian. On the West, it is spell-bound by Mohammedan delusion. To the South, from the Persian gulf, to the sea of Kamschatka, including also its numberless islands, except where here and there, a Syrian church, or a missionary station twinkles amidst the gloom; the whole of this immense portion of the human race is sitting in the region and shadow of death. Such then is the field for our exertion. It encircles the whole family of man, it includes every unevangelized being of the species to which we belong. We have thus surveyed the missionary field, that we may know how great is the undertaking to which we stand committed.

We have also made an estimate of the *miseries* of this world. We have seen how in many places the human mind, shackled by ignorance and enfeebled by vice, has dwindled almost to the standard of a brute. Our indignation has kindled at hearing of men immortal as ourselves, bowing down and worshipping a wandering beggar, or paying adoration to reptiles and to stones.

Not only is intellect every where under the dominion of idolatry prostrated; beyond the boundaries of Christendom, on every side the dark places of the earth are filled with the habitations of cruelty. We have mourned over the savage ferocity of the Indians of our western wilderness. We have turned to Africa, and seen almost the whole continent a prey to lawless banditti, or else bowing down in the most revolting idolatry. We have descended along her coast, and beheld villages burnt or depopulated, fields laid waste, and her people, who have escaped destruction, naked and famishing, flee to their forests at the sight of a stranger. We have asked, What fearful visitation of Heaven has laid these settlements in ruins? What destroying pestilence has swept over this land, consigning to oblivion almost its entire population? What mean the smoking ruins of so many habitations? And why is yon fresh sod crimsoned and slippery with the traces of recent murder? We have been pointed to the dark slave-ship hovering over her coast, and have been told that two hundred thousand defenceless beings are annually stolen away, to be murder-

ed on their passage, or consigned for life to a captivity more terrible than death!

We have turned to Asia, and beheld how the demon of her idolatry has worse than debased, has brutalized the mind of man. Every where his despotism has been grievous; here, with merciless tyranny, he has exulted in the misery of his victims. He has rent from the human heart all that was endearing in the charities of life. He has taught the mother to tear away the infant as it smiled in her bosom, and cast it, the shrieking prey, to contending alligators. He has taught the son to light the funeral pile, and to witness unmoved, the dying agonies of his widowed, murdered mother!

We have looked upon all this; and our object is, to purify the whole earth from these abominations. Our object will not have been accomplished till the tomahawk shall be buried forever, and the tree of peace spread its broad branches from the Atlantick to the Pacifick; until a thousand smiling villages shall be reflected from the waves of the Missouri, and the distant valleys of the West echo with the song of the reaper; till the wilderness and the solitary place shall have been glad for us, and the desert has rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.

Our labours are not to cease, until the last slave-ship shall have visited the coast of Africa, and, the nations of Europe and America having long since redressed her aggravated wrongs, Ethiopia, from the Mediterranean to the Cape, shall have stretched forth her hand unto God.

How changed will then be the face of Asia! Bramins and sooders and casts and shasters will have passed away, like the mist which rolls up the mountain's side before the rising glories of a summer's morning, while the land on which it rested, shining forth in all its loveliness, shall, from its numberless habitations, send forth the high praises of God and the Lamb. The Hindoo mother will gaze upon her infant with the same tenderness which throbs in the breast of any one of you who now hears me, and the Hindoo son will pour into the wounded bosom of his widowed parent, the oil of peace and consolation.

In a word, point us to the loveliest village that smiles upon a Scottish or New-England landscape, and compare

it with the filthiness and brutality of a Caffrarian kraal, and we tell you that our object is to render that Caffrarian kraal as happy and as gladsome as that Scottish or New-England village. Point us to the spot on the face of the earth, where liberty is best understood and most perfectly enjoyed, where intellect shoots forth in its richest luxuriance, and where all the kindlier feelings of the heart are constantly seen in their most graceful exercise; point us to the loveliest and happiest neighbourhood in the world on which we dwell; and we tell you that our object is to render this whole earth, with all its nations and kindreds and tongues and people, as happy, nay, happier than that neighbourhood.

We have considered these beings as immortal, and candidates for an eternity of happiness or misery. And we cannot avoid the belief that they are exposed to eternal misery. Here you will observe the question with us is not, whether a heathen, unlearned in the gospel, can be saved. We are willing to admit that he may. But if he be saved, he must possess holiness of heart; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. And where shall we find holy heathen? Where is there the vestige of purity of heart among unevangelized nations? It is in vain to talk about the innocence of these children of nature. It is in vain to tell us of their graceful mythology. Their gods are such as lust makes welcome. Of their very religious services, it is a shame even to speak. To settle the question concerning their future destiny, it would only seem necessary to ask, What would be the character of that future state, in which those principles of heart which the whole history of the heathen world develops, were suffered to operate in their unrestrained malignity?

No! solemn as is the thought, we do believe, that dying in their present state, they will be exposed to all that is awful in the wrath of Almighty God. And we do believe that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Our object is to convey to those who are perishing the news of this salvation. It is to furnish every family upon the face of the whole earth with the word of God written in its own language, and to send to

every neighbourhood a preacher of the cross of Christ. Our object will not be accomplished until every idol temple shall have been utterly abolished, and a temple to Jehovah erected in its room; until this earth, instead of being a theatre on which immortal beings are preparing by crime for eternal condemnation, shall become one universal temple, in which the children of men are learning the anthems of the blessed above, and becoming meet to join the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven. Our design will not be completed until

> "One song employs all nations, and all cry
> Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us;
> The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks
> Shout to each other, and the mountain tops
> From distant mountains catch the flying joy;
> Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
> Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

The object of the missionary enterprise embraces every child of Adam. It is vast as the race to whom its operations are of necessity limited. It would confer upon every individual on earth, all that intellectual or moral cultivation can bestow. It would rescue a world from the indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish reserved for every son of man that doeth evil, and give it a title to glory, honour, and immortality. You see, then, that our object is, not only to affect every individual of the species, but to affect him in the momentous extremes of infinite happiness and infinite wo. And now we ask, What object ever undertaken by man can compare with this same design of evangelizing the world? Patriotism itself fades away before it, and acknowledges the supremacy of an enterprise, which seizes, with so strong a grasp, upon both the temporal and eternal destinies of the whole family of man.

But all this is not to be accomplished without laborious exertion. Hence we remark,

2d. THE MISSIONARY UNDERTAKING IS ARDUOUS ENOUGH TO CALL INTO ACTION THE NOBLEST ENERGIES OF MAN.

Its arduousness is explained in one word, our *Field is the World.* Our object is to effect an entire moral revolution in the whole human race. Its arduousness then results of necessity from its magnitude.

I need not say to an audience acquainted with the nature of the human mind, that a large moral mass is not easily and permanently affected. A little leaven does not soon leaven the whole lump. To produce a change even of speculative opinion upon a single nation, is an undertaking not easily accomplished. In the case before us, not a nation, but a world is to be *regenerated:* therefore the change which we would effect is far from being merely speculative. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Nothing short of this new creation will answer our purpose. We go forth not to persuade men to turn from one idol to another, but to turn universally from idols to serve the living God. We call upon those who are earthly, sensual, devilish, to set their affections on things above. We go forth exhorting men to forsake every cherished lust, and present themselves a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. And this mighty moral revolution is to be effected, not in a family, a tribe, or a nation, but in a world which lieth in wickedness.

We have to operate upon a race divided into different nations, speaking a thousand different languages, under every different form of government from absolute inertness to unbridled tyranny, and inhabiting every district of country, salubrious or deadly, from the equator to the poles. To all these nations must the gospel be sent, into all these languages must the Bible be translated, to all these climes, salubrious or deadly, must the missionary penetrate, and under all these forms of government, mild or despotick, must he preach Christ and him crucified.

Besides, we shall frequently interfere with the more sordid interests of men; and we expect them to increase the difficulties of our undertaking. If we can turn the heathen to God, many a source of unholy traffick will be dried up, and many a convenience of unhallowed gratification taken away. And hence we may expect that the traffickers in human flesh, the disciples of mammon, and the devotees of pleasure, will be against us. From the heathen themselves we have the blackest darkness of ignorance to dispel. We have to assault systems venerable for their antiquity, and interwoven with every thing that is proud in a nation's history. Above all, we have to oppose

the depravity of the human heart, grown still more inveterate by ages of continuance in unrestrained iniquity. In a word, we go forth to urge upon a world dead in trespasses and sins, a thorough renewal of heart, and an universal reformation of practice.

Brief as is this view of the difficulties which surround us, and time will not allow us to state them more in detail, you see that our undertaking is, as we said, arduous enough to task to the uttermost the noblest energies of man.

This enterprise requires consummate wisdom in the missionary who goes abroad, as well as in those who manage the concerns of a society at home. He who goes forth unprotected, to preach Christ to despotick or badly governed nations, must be wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove. With undeviating firmness upon every thing essential, he must combine the most yielding facility upon all that is unimportant. And thus while he goes forth in the spirit and power of Elias, he must at the same time become all things to all men, that by all means he may gain some. Great abilities are also required in him who conducts the mission at home. He must awaken, animate, and direct the sentiments of a very large portion of the community in which he resides, whilst at the same time, through a hundred different agents, he is exerting a powerful influence upon half as many nations a thousand or ten thousand miles off. Indeed it is hazarding nothing to predict, that if efforts for the extension of the gospel continue to multiply with their present ratio of increase, as great abilities will, in a few years, be required for transacting the business of a missionary society, as for conducting the affairs of a political cabinet.

The missionary undertaking calls for perseverance; a perseverance of that character, which, having once formed its purpose, never wavers from it till death. And if ever this attribute has been so exhibited as to challenge the respect of every man of feeling, it has been in such instances as are recorded in the history of the missions to Greenland and to the South Sea Islands, where we beheld men, for fifteen or twenty years, suffer every thing but martyrdom, and then, seeing no fruit from their labour, resolve

to labour on till death, if so be they might at last, save one benighted heathen from the error of his ways.

This undertaking calls for self denial of the highest and holiest character. He who engages in it must, at the very outset, dismiss every wish to stipulate for any thing but the mere favour of God. His first act is a voluntary exile from all that a refined education loves; and every other act must be in unison with this. The salvation of the heathen is the object for which he sacrifices, and is willing to sacrifice, every thing that the heart clings to on earth. For this object he would live; for this he would die; nay, he would live any where, and die any how, if so be he might rescue one soul from everlasting wo.

Hence you see that this undertaking requires courage. It is not the courage which, wrought up by the stimulus of popular applause, can rush now and then upon the cannon's mouth; it is the courage which, alone and unapplauded, will, year after year, look death, every moment, in the face, and never shrink from its purpose. It is a principle which will "make a man intrepidly dare every thing which can attack or oppose him within the whole sphere of mortality, retain his purpose unshaken amidst the ruins of the world, and press toward his object while death is impending over him."* Such was the spirit which spake by the mouth of an Apostle when he said, And now I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befal me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. Yet none of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.

But above all, the missionary undertaking requires faith, in its holiest and sublimest exercise. And let it not be supposed that we speak at random, when we mention the sublimity of faith. "Whatever," says the British moralist, "withdraws us from the power of the senses; whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings."† And when we speak of faith, we refer

* Foster. † Tour to the Hebrides. Iona.

to a principle which gives substance to things hoped for, and evidence to things not seen; which, bending her keen glance on the eternal weight of glory, makes it a constant motive to holy enterprise; which, fixing her eagle eye upon the infinite of future, makes it bear right well upon the purposes of to-day; a principle which enables a poor feeble tenant of the dust to take strong hold upon the perfections of Jehovah; and, fastening his hopes to the very throne of the Eternal, "bid earth roll, nor feel its idle whirl." This principle is the unfailing support of the missionary through the long years of his toilsome pilgrimage; and, when he is compared with the heroes of this world, it is peculiar to him. By as much then as the Christian enterprise calls into being this one principle, the noblest that can attach to the character of a creature, by so much does its execution surpass in sublimity every other.

3d. Let us consider THE MEANS BY WHICH THIS MORAL REVOLUTION IS TO BE EFFECTED. It is, in a word, by the preaching of Jesus Christ and him crucified. It is by going forth and telling the lost children of men, that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to die for them; and by all the eloquence of such an appeal, to entreat them, for Christ's sake, to be reconciled unto God. This is the lever by which, we believe, the moral universe is to be raised; this is the instrument by which a sinful world is to be regenerated.

And consider the commanding simplicity of this means, devised by Omniscience to effect a purpose so glorious. This world is to be restored to more than it lost by the fall, by the simple annunciation of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Here we behold means apparently the weakest, employed to effect the most magnificent of purposes. And how plainly does this bespeak the agency of the omnipotent God. The means which effect his greatest purposes in the kingdom of nature, are simple and unostentatious; while those which man employs are complicated and tumultuous. How many intellects are tasked, how many hands are wearied, how many arts exhausted in preparing for the event of a single battle; and how great is the tumult of the moment of decision. In all this, man only imitates the inferior agents of nature. The autumnal tempest, whose sphere of action is limited to a little spot upon our little world, comes forth attended by the roar of

thunder and the flash of lightning; while the attraction of gravitation, that stupendous force which binds together the mighty masses of the material universe, acts silently. In the sublimest of natural transactions, the greatest result is ascribed to the simplest, the most unique of causes. He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.

Contemplate the benevolence of these means. In practice, the precepts of the gospel may be summed up in the single command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself. We expect to teach one man obedience to this command, and that he will feel obliged to teach his neighbour, who will feel obliged to teach others, who are again to become teachers, until the whole world shall be peopled with one family of brethren. Animosity is to be done away by inculcating universally the obligation of love. In this manner we expect to teach rulers justice, and subjects submission; to open the heart of the miser, and unloose the grasp of the oppressor. It is thus we expect the time to be hastened onward when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; when nation shall no more lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

With this process, compare the means by which men, on the principles of this world, effect a melioration in the condition of their species. Their almost universal agent is, threatened or inflicted misery. And, from the nature of the case, it cannot be otherwise. Without altering the disposition of the heart, they only attempt to control its exercise. And they must control it by showing their power to make the indulgence of that disposition the source of more misery than happiness. Hence when men confer a benefit upon a portion of their brethren, it is generally preceded by a protracted struggle to decide which can inflict most, or which can suffer longest. Hence the arm of the patriot is generally and of necessity bathed in blood. Hence with the shouts of victory from the nation he has delivered, there arises also the sigh of the widow, and the weeping of the orphan. Man produces good by the apprehension or the infliction of evil. The gospel produces good by the universal diffusion of the principles of benevolence. In the former case, one party must generally suffer; in the latter, all parties are certainly more

happy. The one, like the mountain torrent, may fertilize now and then a valley beneath, but not until it has wildly swept away the forest above, and disfigured the lovely landscape with many an unseemly scar. Not so the other;

> "It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath; it is twice bless'd,
> It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes."

Consider the efficacy of these means. The reasons which teach us to rely upon them with confidence may be thus briefly stated.

1. We see that all which is really terrific in the misery of man results from the disease of his moral nature. If this can be healed, man may be restored to happiness. Now the gospel of Jesus Christ is the remedy devised by Omniscience specifically for this purpose, and therefore we do certainly know that it will inevitably succeed.

2. It is easy to be seen, that the universal obedience to the command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself, would make this world a heaven. But nothing other than the gospel of Christ can persuade men to this obedience. Reason cannot do it; philosophy cannot do it; civilization cannot do it. The cross of Christ alone has power to bend the stubborn will to obedience, and melt the frozen heart to love. For, said one who had experienced its efficacy, the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again.

3. The preaching of the cross of Christ is a remedy for the miseries of the fall which has been tested by the experience of eighteen hundred years, and has never in a single instance failed. Its efficacy has been proved by human beings of all ages, from the lisping infant to the sinner an hundred years old. All climates have witnessed its power. From the ice-bound cliffs of Greenland to the banks of the voluptuous Ganges, the simple story of Christ crucified, has turned men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Its effect has been the same with men of the most dissimilar conditions; from the abandoned inhabitant of Newgate, to the dweller in the

palaces of kings. It has been equally sovereign amidst the scattered inhabitants of the forest and the crowded population of the densest metropolis. Every where and at all times it has been the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

4. And lastly, we know from the word of the living God, that it will be successful, until this whole world has been redeemed from the effects of man's first disobedience. As truly as I live, saith Jehovah, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord. Ask of me, saith he to his Son, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. In the Revelation which he gave to his servant John of things which should shortly come to pass; I heard, said the Apostle, great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. Here then is the ground of our unwavering confidence. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the word of God, until all be fulfilled. Such, then, are the means on which we rely for the accomplishment of our object, and such the grounds upon which we rest our confidence of success.

And now, my hearers, deliberately consider the nature of the missionary enterprise. Reflect upon the dignity of its object; the high moral and intellectual powers which are to be called forth in its execution; the simplicity, benevolence, and efficacy of the means by which all this is to be achieved; and we ask you, Does not every other enterprise to which man ever put forth his strength dwindle into insignificance, before that of preaching Christ crucified to a lost and perishing world?

Engaged in such an object, and supported by such assurances, you may readily suppose, we can very well bear the contempt of those who would point at us the finger of scorn. It is written, In the last days there shall be scoffers. We regret that it should be so. We regret that men should oppose an enterprise, of which the chief object is, to turn sinners unto holiness. We pity them, and we will pray for them. For we consider their situation far other than enviable. We recollect that it was once said

by the Divine Missionary, to the first band which he commissioned, He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. So that this very contempt may at last, involve them in a controversy infinitely more serious than they at present anticipate. The reviler of missions, and the missionary of the cross, must both stand before the judgment seat of Him who said, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. It is affecting to think, that whilst the one, surrounded by the nation who, through his instrumentality, have been rescued from everlasting death, shall receive the plaudit, Well done, good and faithful servant; the other may be numbered with those despisers who wonder and perish. O that they might know, even in this their day, the things which belong to their peace, before they are hidden from their eyes!

You can also easily perceive how it is that we are not soon disheartened by those who tell us of the difficulties, nay, the hopelessness, of our undertaking. They may point us to countries once the seat of the church, now overspread with Mohammedan delusion; or, bidding us look at nations who once believed as we do, now contending for what we consider fatal error, they may assure us that our cause is declining. To all this we have two answers. First, the assumption that our cause is declining, is utterly gratuitous. We think it not difficult to prove, that the distinctive principles we so much venerate, never swayed so powerful an influence over the destinies of the human race as at this very moment. Point us to those nations of the earth to whom moral and intellectual cultivation, inexhaustible resources, progress in arts, and sagacity in council, have assigned the highest rank in political importance, and you point us to nations whose religious opinions are most closely allied to those we cherish. Besides, when was there a period, since the days of the Apostles, in which so many converts have been made to these principles, as have been made, both from Christian and Pagan nations, within the last five and twenty years? Never did the people of the saints of the Most High look so much like going forth in serious earnest, to take possession of the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole

heaven, as at this very day. We see, then, nothing in the signs of the times which forebodes a failure, but every thing which promises that our undertaking will prosper. But secondly, suppose the cause did seem declining; we should see no reason to relax our exertions, for Jesus Christ has said, Preach the gospel to every creature. Appearances, whether prosperous or adverse, alter not the obligation to obey a positive command of Almighty God.

Again, suppose all that is affirmed were true. If it must be, let it be. Let the dark cloud of infidelity overspread Europe, cross the ocean, and cover our own beloved land. Let nation after nation swerve from the faith. Let iniquity abound, and the love of many wax cold, even until there is on the face of this earth, but one pure church of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All we ask is, that we may be members of that one church. God grant that we may throw ourselves into this Thermopylæ of the moral universe.

But even then, we should have no fear that the church of God would be exterminated. We would call to remembrance the years of the right hand of the Most High. We would recollect there was once a time, when the whole church of Christ, not only could be, but actually was, gathered with one accord in one place. It was then that that place was shaken as with a rushing mighty wind, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. That same day, three thousand were added to the Lord. Soon, we hear, they have filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. The church has commenced her march. Samaria has with one accord believed the gospel. Antioch has become obedient to the faith. The name of Christ has been proclaimed throughout Asia Minor. The temples of the gods, as though smitten by an invisible hand, are deserted. The citizens of Ephesus cry out in despair, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! Licentious Corinth is purified by the preaching of Christ crucified. Persecution puts forth her arm to arrest the spreading "superstition." But the progress of the faith cannot be stayed. The church of God advances unhurt, amidst racks and dungeons, persecutions and death; yea, "smiles at the drawn dagger, and defies its point." She has entered Italy, and appears before the walls of the Eternal City. Idolatry falls prostrate at her approach. Her

ensign floats in triumph over the capitol. She has placed upon her brow the diadem of the Cæsars!

After having witnessed such successes, and under such circumstances, we are not to be moved by discouragements. To all of them we answer, *Our Field is the World.* The more arduous the undertaking, the greater will be the glory. And that glory will be ours; for God Almighty is with us.

This enterprise of mercy the Son of God came down from heaven to commence, and in commencing it, he laid down his life. To us has he granted the high privilege of carrying it forward. The legacy which he left us, as he was ascending to his Father and our Father, and to his God and to our God, was, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. With such an object before us, under such a Leader, and supported by such promises, other motives to exertion are unnecessary. Each one of you will anxiously inquire, how he may become a co-worker with the Son of God, in the glorious design of rescuing a world from the miseries of the fall!

Blessed be God, this is a work in which every one of us is permitted to do something. None so poor, none so weak, none so insignificant, but a place of action is assigned him; and the cause expects every man to do his duty. We answer, then,

1. You may assist in it by your prayers. After all that we have said about means, we know that every thing will be in vain without the influences of the Holy Spirit. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, it is God who giveth the increase. And these influences are promised, and promised alone, in answer to prayer. Ye then who love the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, until he establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth.

2. You may assist by your personal exertions. This cause requires a vigorous, persevering, universal and systematick effort. It requires that a spirit should pervade every one of us, which shall prompt him to ask himself every morning, What can I do for Christ to-day? and which should make him feel humbled and ashamed, if at evening, he were obliged to confess he had done nothing. Each one of us is as much obligated as the missionaries

themselves, to do all in his power to advance the common cause of Christianity. We, equally with them, have embraced that gospel, of which the fundamental principle is, *None of us liveth to himself.* And not only is every one bound to exert himself to the uttermost, the same obligation rests upon us so to direct our exertions, that each of them may produce the greatest effect. Each one of us may influence others to embark in the undertaking. Each one whom we have influenced, may be induced to enlist that circle of which he is the centre, until a self-extending system of intense and reverberated action shall embody into one invincible phalanx, "the sacramental host of God's elect." Awake, then, brethren, from your slumbers. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And recollect that what you would do, must be done quickly. The day is far spent; the night is at hand. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest.

3. You may assist by your pecuniary contributions. An opportunity of this kind will be presented this evening. And here, I trust, it is unnecessary to say that in such a cause we consider it a privilege to give. How so worthily can you appropriate a portion of that substance which Providence has given you, as in sending to your fellow men, who sit in the region and shadow of death, a knowledge of the God who made them, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? We pray you, so use the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. But I doubt not you already burn with desire to testify your love to the crucified Redeemer. Enthroned in the high and holy place, He looks down at this moment upon the heart of every one of us, and will accept of your offering, though it be but the widow's mite, if it be given with the widow's feeling. In the last day of solemn account, he will acknowledge it before an assembled universe, saying, In as much as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me!

May God of his grace enable us so to act, that on that day, we may meet with joy the record of the doings of this evening; and to his name shall be the glory in Christ. Amen.